▼ ▼ ▼ CHAPTER 8

Life After Reconstruction

The period between the end of Reconstruction in 1877 and the middle 1900s was not a happy time for South Carolina. While some economic growth took place, the state lagged behind the rest of the nation. Political and economic leaders failed to provide many opportunities for people to better themselves. Politics centered around racial hatred. Politicians did not campaign on any realistic economic programs that might improve life in the state. Rather, they used the tactics of demagogues. That is, they won votes mostly by appealing to white prejudice and fear. This made the period especially hard for African-Americans.

At the same time, this was an important period for African-Americans in the state. It paved the way for positive changes that would begin to surface in the 1940s. A minimal amount of wealth and prosperity were needed before any civil rights movement could start. Generations of people struggled to build that little bit of wealth in the late 1800s and early 1900s. The struggle was generally very quiet. It took place every day in fields and modest schools and small businesses all over the state. This chapter tells the story of that struggle.

Coping with Discrimination

What were African-Americans to do after losing the political rights for which so many people died in the Civil War? Many decided to stay, ignore politics, and do the best they could through hard work and self-help. Others decided to leave. They sought opportunity wherever they could find it. That pioneering spirit took African-Americans from South Carolina to states all over the nation and to nations all over the world.

The Reverend Richard Carroll was one of the strongest voices for hard work and self-help. A native of Barnwell County, he was born just before the Civil War. He was one of the many African-American leaders in the state who attended Benedict College. While at Benedict he developed his speaking skills. During the Spanish-American War, he served in the military as a chaplain. Historians regard Carroll as South Carolina's version of Booker T. Washington because both had similar messages. Whites were willing to listen to Carroll because he never asked for social or even legal equality. All he asked was for his people to be given a chance to work hard and increase the wealth of the state.

Other African-American leaders found fault with Carroll. They felt he asked for too little. The Reverend John Adams of Columbia argued in speeches that problems such as poor living conditions resulted from white attitudes and treatment. He felt that Carroll placed too much blame on African-Americans. Despite these criticisms, Carroll was a powerful voice for African-Americans in the period around the turn of the century.

Carroll's message to African-American audiences had two main parts. First, he spoke of self-improvement through strong self-discipline and education. He felt that African-Americans had to prove their worth to whites. Second, he urged his audiences to "go to the farm." Whites could have the cities and factories. On the farm, African-Americans could be productive. Farm life also had the advantage of minimizing contact with whites.

We will look at each of these two ideas. First, let us look at self-help through education.

Educational Self-Help

After Reconstruction, African-Americans had a difficult time finding any public education. For fifty years after the Civil War, only one public school in Colum-

bia accepted African-Americans. This was Howard School opened in 1867. It served children of all grades until 1916.

Columbia's second public school for African-Americans, Booker T. Washington High School, was opened in 1916. This school was one of the few in South Carolina to be accredited by the Southern Association of Colleges and Schools. It was the only public high school for Columbia's African-Americans until 1948. Because African-Americans had so few opportunities to get an education anywhere in the state, some families even moved to Columbia. Others boarded their children with Columbia families. Graduates include many famous people, such as National Teacher of the Year Fannie Phelps Adams, J. C. Caroline, who broke Red Grange's football records, heart specialist Dr. Edwin Cooper, Gilroy Griffith, one of the first executives hired by NBC, and Judge Matthew Perry. Civil rights activist Modjestka Simkins taught there for awhile, as did two children of photographer Richard Roberts, whose work you see throughout this book.

Booker T. Washington High School provided more than just an education to African-Americans. It became a "cultural center" for the African-American community, in the words of one of its graduates. Operettas and concerts were performed there. The John Work Chorus, named for the director of the Fisk Jubilee Singers, provided a musical outlet for the students. The school required every tenth, eleventh and twelfth grader to sing in this chorus. People came from miles around to hear the 400 to 500 students sing spirituals at the yearly concert. Teachers took attendance for this important event. Girls were required to dress in white, and boys wore blue pants, white shirts, and dark ties.

Booker T. Washington High School closed in 1974. As a result of integration, African-American children were now able to attend schools throughout Columbia. The University of South Carolina bought the campus and turned it into the Booker T. Washington Center. Today it is a center for medical research, drama, and early childhood education.

Many of the graduates of Booker T. Washington were determined that the school should not be forgotten. With the help of the Columbia Panhellenic Council, they formed the Booker T. Washington Foundation in 1974. It may have been the first organization of its kind. The Foundation helps to keep the memory of the school alive in the community for young people, many of whose families attended for several generations. Every year, the alumni hold a banquet to honor former faculty and students. At least ten scholarships are awarded each year. Many classes also hold their reunions at this time. In addition, over one hundred former students come together annually and sing at the Koger Center in Columbia. The Foundation has also attempted to preserve the trophies and other memorabilia from the school. Eventually they hope to display these in a museum.

Although educational opportunities were limited, Columbia was better than most other places in the state. Before World War I, most African-Americans in the state had no access to any high school.

As a result, self-help was the only answer. Hard working people founded a number of private schools to educate African-Americans. These schools educated many of the individuals mentioned throughout this book. African-American colleges ran elementary and secondary schools that educated others. Although we will describe only a few of the private schools, there were a number of others scattered around the state. These include Laing High School in Mt. Pleasant, Brainerd Institute in Chester, Friendship Normal and Industrial Institute in Rock Hill, Mather School in Beaufort, Lancaster Normal and Industrial School in Lancaster, Avery Institute in Charleston, and Coulter Academy in Cheraw. Church sponsorship helped most of the schools open.

At its peak in the 1930s and 1940s, Mather Academy served 200 students. The United Methodist Church founded it in 1887. Sarah Babcock, a white teacher from the North, had taught African-American children in Camden after her arrival in 1867. She bought property on which to locate the growing school. After she returned North to be married to the Rev. James Mather, she continued her interest in the school. Because she knew many important people through her church, she was able to help. At first, only whites taught at Mather Academy, but over the years, both blacks and whites became teachers at the school. They worked for very little pay. Former students have said that attending a school with an integrated staff helped. It prepared them for a world where they would

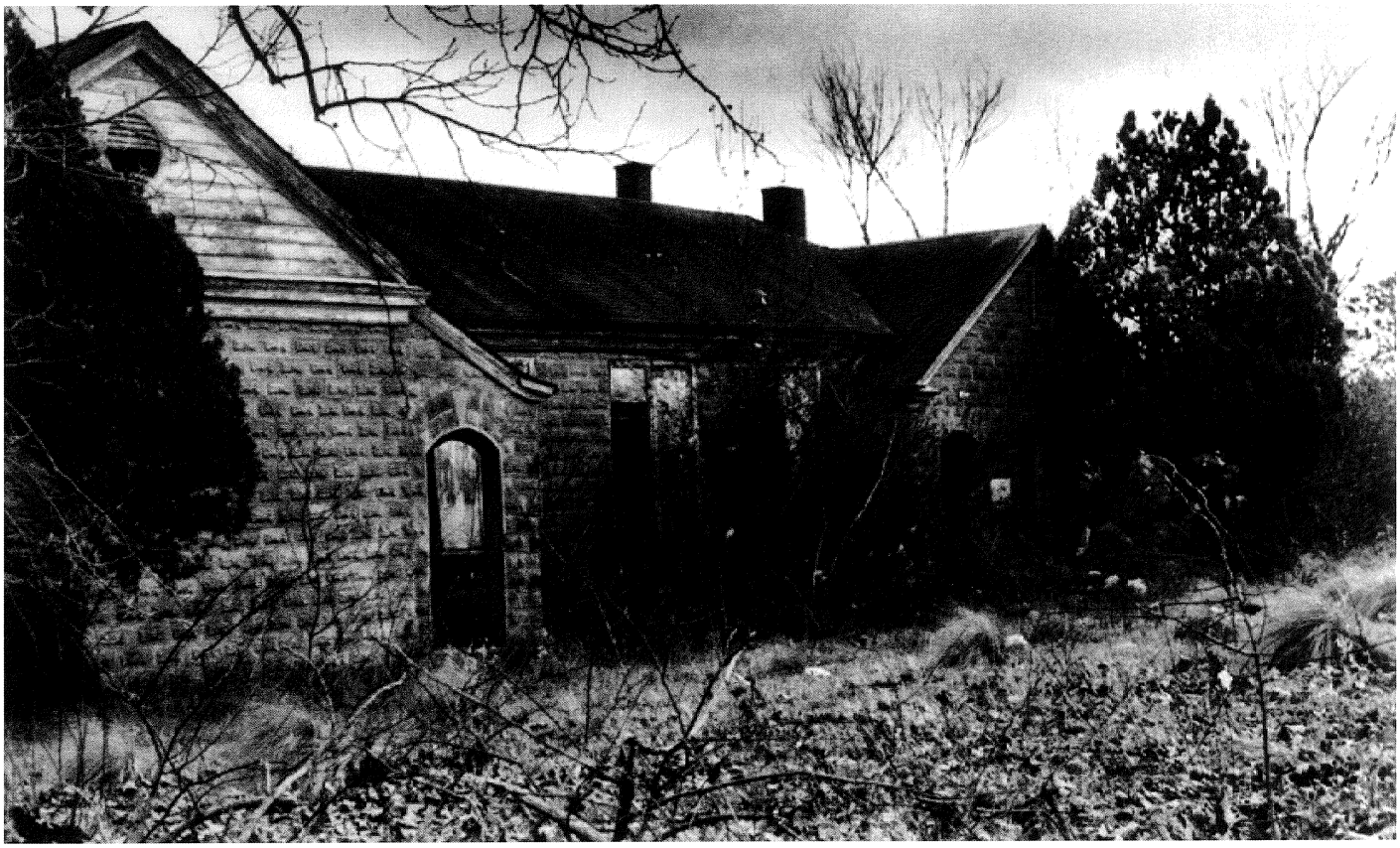
have to live and work with all kinds of people. Located in Camden, Mather was the only African-American secondary school in South Carolina to be accredited at that time. Many of its graduates, such as Congressman Jim Clyburn, went on to become successful professionals.

As public schools began to improve, enrollment dropped in private schools. Many closed or became part of the public education system in the 1950s. Mather outlasted most others. In 1983, the Methodist Church decided that the school had accomplished its purpose. They closed Mather Academy and put the property up for sale. However, the property was not sold, and the buildings began to deteriorate. In 1993 the buildings were torn down. The cost of renovations was too great. Mather Academy is now just a memory in the hearts of its many graduates. Several weeks after Mather Academy was torn down, the state government formed the South Carolina African-American Heritage Council. The purpose of the Council is to preserve properties that are of historical importance to African-Americans.

In a time when few professions were open to African-Americans, Bettis Academy, located in the small town of Trenton in Edgefield County, trained teachers. About three-fourths of its graduates became teachers. In turn, they educated other young African-Americans. The Rev. Alexander Bettis founded Bettis Academy in 1881. Formerly enslaved, Bettis could not read or write. Bettis organized a group of people to raise money to educate themselves. Once they had collected $300, Bettis convinced the group to look beyond themselves. So they built a school.

Bettis Academy began as an industrial school. What this means is that beyond basic reading and writing, it taught trades and crafts, such as carpentry or bricklaying. Gradually, the school added other

Many private schools were built and run with the help of African-Americans in South Carolina because public schools were so poor. Bettis Academy in rural Edgefield County was one such school. This is one of the buildings on its campus that remains today. Courtesy, Aiken Standard. 1993 photo by Ginny Southworth.



courses. These included cooking, home health care, typing, and cosmetology.

Eventually, Bettis Academy served children from first grade through the first two years of college. Graduates speak warmly of the "nurturing" environment they found at an all-black school in those days. Bettis grew until it had nearly 1,000 students. Its well-known graduates include AME Bishop Fred James.

Bettis Academy closed in 1952 when South Carolina began to provide a public education for African-Americans. The county government turned the land where it stood into a park. The facilities include softball, soccer, and football fields, as well as a picnic area, jogging track, tennis, and basketball courts.

Francis L. Cardozo, an African-American who had taught school in the North, founded Avery Normal Institute. After several name changes, the school was named for a Philadelphia minister, Reverend Avery. He left the school enough money to make a permanent location possible. Opened in 1867 at this site in Charleston, the school became well-known across the country. It provided an education from kindergarten through high school. It was also a "normal" school. This means it trained teachers. The school offered an impressive range of courses. They included politics, economics, literature, foreign language, math, accounting, history, philosophy, and physiology, as well as basic education and teacher-training courses. It taught teachers, who in turn taught generations of African-Americans in Charleston.

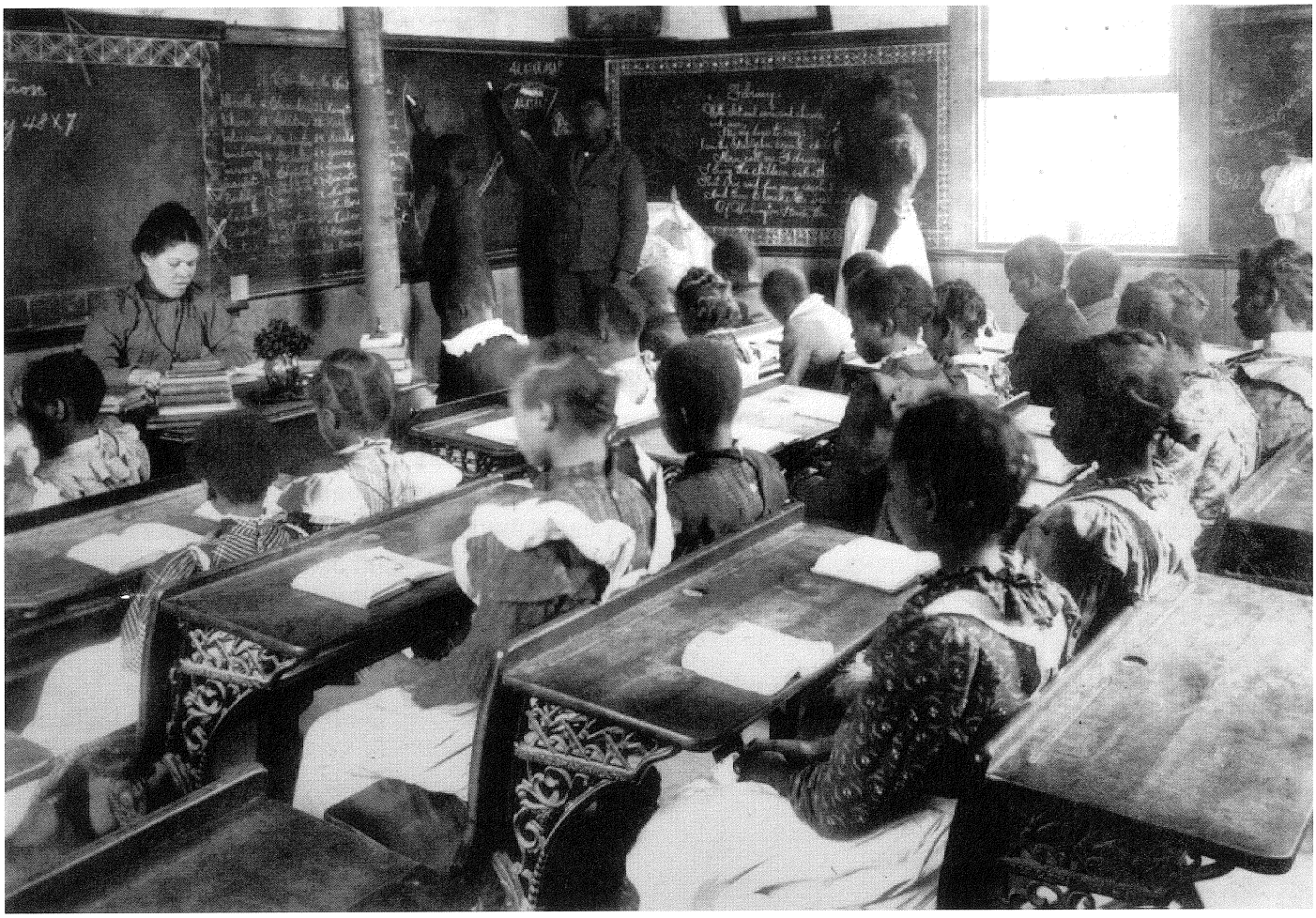
The Congregational American Missionary Association ran the school. In 1947, it became part of the public school system. The school closed in 1954. The Avery Research Center for African-American History and Culture is located on its site today.

When Martha Schofield, a white teacher on St. Helena Island, became sick in 1868, she decided to move to Aiken. There she founded the Schofield Normal and Industrial School. Its industrial courses included blacksmithing and shoemaking. In addition Schofield trained professionals. One of its most famous graduates was Dr. Matilda Evans, who became South Carolina's first native-born African-American woman doctor. In 1938, Schofield became a high school. Because of its "semi-public" status, it charged no tuition. It officially became a public school in 1950. After school desegregation, Scholfield became one of Aiken County's middle schools.

A number of individuals made important contributions in the field of education in the years after Reconstruction. The number of African-American teachers in the state tripled between 1876 and 1900. These people, taught by the Reconstruction generation and white missionaries from the North, went on to educate the children who grew up in a new century. In some cases being an educator was a stepping stone to further accomplishments. There were thousands, but we only have space for a few of their stories.

Born in Georgia in 1876, Elizabeth Evelyn Wright was the seventh of twenty-one children. As a child she attended a school which met only three months a year. School terms were often quite short in those days. She went to college at Tuskegee despite her poor health. She left college in 1892 to teach in Hampton County, South Carolina. She returned to complete her college degree and graduated in 1894. She came back to Hampton County to build a school. She faced much opposition from both blacks and whites. African-Americans had no hope that she could do it, despite the help offered her by a Maryland judge. Whites burned down the building where school was to be held. They destroyed lumber bought to build a new school. She raised money to buy new building materials by speaking at churches in Hampton and Colleton Counties. Often she had to walk twenty miles a day. When the owner of the property she had selected for a school decided not to sell, she had to start over again. Another teacher, Jessie Dorsey, helped her search for a new school site. Eventually she chose a site in Denmark. With the help of some whites there, she bought the land. In 1897, the Denmark Industrial School was organized. The name was changed to Voorhees Industrial School in 1902, in honor of a contributor. Today Voorhees is a college.

As African-Americans gained an education, they needed access to books. Susan Dart Butler, who was born in 1889, helped make that possible. She opened a free library for African-Americans in Charleston. She started the library in her own home in 1927 and paid all expenses involved. As a result of her work, the Charleston Committee of the Southern Commission on Interracial Cooperation became interested. It



A View of Room #2, 1900, by Arthur L. MacBeth. A silver gelatin print reproduced with permission of South Caroliniana Library. From "Conflict and Transcendence: African-American Art in South Carolina," organized by the Columbia Museum of Art.

helped to establish the Dart Hall Branch of the Charleston County Free Library for African-Americans in 1931. Butler died in 1959.

William A. Sinclair wore many hats. His personal experience taught him about injustice. He was born in enslavement in 1858 in Georgetown. Along with his mother, he was sold away from his father. After Emancipation, he returned to Georgetown to live with his father. He attended public schools and studied at Claflin and the University of South Carolina. With the end of Reconstruction, his studies at the University of South Carolina ended. A lynch mob murdered his father. So he left the state to study at Howard University in Washington, D.C. He earned a bachelor's degree and a theological degree. After briefly attending Andover Theological Seminary, he worked for the American Missionary Association. He decided to attend medical school and earned a degree from Meharry Medical College. A man of many talents, he served as financial secretary of Howard University from 1888 to 1903. During this time he entered the struggle for racial justice. He helped create the NAACP in 1909. Returning to Georgetown, he became principal of the public school. There he helped educate another generation. He was one of the few men of his time who emphasized the contributions of African-Americans in helping the North win the Civil War. He was also one of the few who saw Reconstruction as a kind of golden age in which people tried to achieve equality. All his life he spoke out against racial segregation. Sadly, he did not live to see much change. He died in 1926.

Janie Glymph Goree became both an educator and a politician. She was born to a sharecropper fam-

ily in 1921 in Newberry County. Because the family had nine children, life was difficult. She had to pick cotton to pay for transportation costs to attend school. Her teachers recognized her ability but she could not afford college even after winning a scholarship. By working as a maid, she earned enough money to go to college at Benedict. She graduated at the top of her class in 1948.

For the next thirty-three years, Goree taught high school math in Union. Along the way she earned a master's degree. She was always generous with her time. Adults learned reading from her. Her church could always count on her help. She also played an active and historic role in local politics. She held office as a municipal judge. In 1978, she ran for mayor of Carlisle and was elected. This made her the first female African-American mayor in South Carolina. As mayor, she traveled to the White House and all over the world. Many groups gave her awards. She has been active in many professional groups like the National Conference of Black Mayors and the World Conference of Mayors. Both as a teacher and as mayor, she opened doors for two generations of African-Americans.

Although African-American schools received little help from the state, sometimes private individuals helped schools flourish. In 1908, Anna T. Jeanes donated $200,000 to add industrial education to African-American schools. The Jeanes Foundation began in Virginia as an experimental program that eventually spread to sixteen other states. The first Jeanes Supervisor was Virginia Randolph, an African-American teacher in Henrico County, Virginia. By the 1950s, over 500 Jeanes Supervisors worked in counties all over the South helping and supervising teachers.

Painting of a tenant farm near Summerville. Reproduced from Constance B. Schulz, Ed., The History of S.C. Slide Collection, *slide D-1 (Sandlapper Publishing Company, 1989). Courtesy of S.C. State Museum.*

Julia Berry became South Carolina's first Jeanes Supervisor in 1912. We know little about her work. In 1913, U. S. Gallman became a supervising industrial teacher in Newberry County. He focused on industrial and agricultural education and on sanitation. Jeanes Supervisors worked with the State Agents for Negro schools. By 1947, there were thirty-seven Jeanes Supervisors in South Carolina.

Jeanes Supervisors took a highly individualistic approach to their work. They tried to help the schools in every way possible. At first they worked to develop a relationship with the community. The Supervisors helped build and repair schools, handled health problems, and did anything else that was needed. Although they seemed more like social workers at times, they helped teachers improve their teaching. Gradually, the focus changed from community to educational services. They sponsored many programs, including reading workshops, children's art exhibits, and in-service programs for teachers.

Agricultural Self-Help

Making a living on the farm was hard in South Carolina. One of the greatest barriers to prosperity for both black and white farmers was the country store. These stores almost always charged very high prices for goods of very low quality. They frequently cheated farmers. Cheating was hard to fight, especially when black farmers had to deal with white store owners. If there was a dispute, white judges, juries, and white sheriffs always backed up white merchants.

The only way to win was to avoid buying from white merchants. Many African-Americans were subsistence farmers who bought little. The more things you made and grew for yourself, the less you had to buy.

Other farmers were able to deal with African-American store owners. However, African-Americans ran only a few stores. In 1880, African-Americans owned only about fifty of the more than 4,500 stores in the state. Doing business was difficult when you had to depend on whites for your supplies. If you complained about a bill or the quality of goods delivered, you could be cut off from any more supplies. If you took your complaint to court, you had to depend on white judges and juries to treat you fairly. Either way you were likely to lose. Even so, the number of African-Americans in business grew during the late 1800s. By 1900, the number grew tenfold to nearly 500. In the little farming community of Promised Land, two families opened stores to serve their neighbors. The Baptists in the community patronized one store. Methodist families gave their business to the other.

African-Americans made several attempts to bypass the small country store entirely. Even stores run by fellow African-Americans had the problem of having to buy their supplies in small amounts. Buy-

Grinding corn around 1910 as had been done back on the plantation. New technology came slowly. From the Penn School Collection. Permission granted by Penn Center, Inc., St. Helena Island, S.C. In the Southern Historical Collection of the Manuscripts Department, University of North Carolina, Chapel Hill. This picture can also be seen in The History of S.C. Slide Collection *(Sandlapper Publishing Company, 1989) as slide D-13.*

ing in small volume meant higher prices for the merchant and the customer. Sadly, few of these efforts had much success because of white fear and opposition. In the late 1880s, the Cooperative Workers of America tried to organize in secret. They tried to set up cooperative stores. They saved money by joining forces and buying supplies in large volume. Threats by whites soon ended that effort.

About a year later, the Colored Farmers' Alliance began organizing in the state. This was a parallel organization to the white Farmers' Alliance that was growing across the rest of the South. This time meetings were open and did not arouse as much white fear. John D. Norris was a school teacher who worked as an organizer for the group. In an 1889 speech he listed the purposes of the group. They were to teach patriotism, respect for the law, and love of home, to help the poor, to promote education, to improve farming methods, and to encourage members to be better husbands and wives. Norris carefully noted that political power was not a goal. By 1890 the group had 30,000 members in South Carolina and printed a newspaper. However, the group began to dissolve a year later. It tried to organize a strike by cotton pickers. The strike failed. Members began to lose faith and dropped out. Within a few years the white Farmers' Alliance met the same fate.

Robert Shaw Wilkinson, second S.C. State College president, 1911-1932. Wilkinson promoted farm and home agents working in local communities across the state. Courtesy S.C. State Museum, the S.C. Postcard Archive, South Caroliniana Library, USC.

Despite these failures, self-help efforts continued. The professor of agriculture at the state college in Orangeburg went around the state creating Colored Farmers' Institutes. His idea was to improve methods used by farmers. For example, the institutes taught farmers how to make their own fertilizers. This made them less dependent on country stores.

About the same time, A. E. Hampton began the Colored Agricultural and Mechanical Association in Columbia. This group spread the idea of holding agricultural fairs for African-Americans. The main purpose was educational. Displays and exhibits taught those attending about better practices in many areas. They learned more about raising poultry, how to plant and cultivate crops, and how to make what they grew into products to sell and use in the home. They promoted self-sufficiency. This was important. The more self-sufficient they were, the less they went into debt.

Soon African-American farmers were holding fairs in counties all over the state. Although education was the major long term benefit, those who came did have fun. Fairs held all kinds of races, from bicycles to sack races. Local bands competed in musical contests that included both marching and playing. Despite lives that were very hard, people could smile and have fun.

By 1900, African-Americans owned or operated more than half the farms in South Carolina. However, they were mostly smaller than farms owned or operated by whites. Even though African-Americans only controlled twenty-seven percent of all the farmland, they used the land well. With only twenty-seven percent of the land, they produced thirty-nine percent of all farm goods. These were hard working people.

COUNTY FAIR AMONG NEGROES

THE NEGROES OF DARLINGTON COUNTY WILL HOLD A FAIR

At Darlington, November 16, 17 and 18.

Its object is to stimulate agricultural and industrial efforts among the masses of their people and thus advance the interest of landlords, tenants and wage earners.

Prizes will be given to Negroes for their best live stock and their best agricultural and industrial products. Full details will be publishedvery soon.

The management is in the hands of sober Negroes of standing and sense. They will conduct matters in a way to gain and hold confidence, and they hereby ask white and black to aid.

Get yourselves and your exhibits ready for November 16, 17, and 18.

For more information write or see

W. M. KING, President
J. L. CAIN, Secretary
DARLINGTON, SOUTH CAROLINA.

(Above) Advertisement from an African-American newspaper, The Society Hill News *on April 15, 1910 for a county fair. The emphasis on self-improvement is clear. Courtesy of the Darlington County Historical Commission. (Left) A scene from the Richland County Colored Fair sometime in the 1920s in a photo by Richard Roberts. Courtesy Roberts family. This can also be seen in slide D-27* The History of the S.C. Slide Collection.

The hoe culture method of agriculture required a great deal of human labor. This method survived well into the 1900s on the small farms of South Carolina. Reproduced from Constance B. Schulz, Ed., The History of S.C. Slide Collection, *slide D-38 (Sandlapper Publishing Company, 1989). Courtesy of S.C. Historical Society.*

Most of the African-Americans who had bought land after the Civil War were able to keep it. By 1900, African-Americans owned more than 15,500 farms. Another 3,300 at least partially owned their farms. This still was less than twenty percent of all African-American farmers. Despite terrible discrimination and despite a legal system that offered nonwhites little protection, the percentage of African-American farmers owning their farms had been increasing since the end of Reconstruction.

While most African-American farmers did well to endure and hang on to their land, a few really prospered. One example was Ben Garrett in Colleton County. He started with nothing after the Civil War. Sixteen years later he owed no debts and owned a farm of over 100 acres. He was even able to lend money to neighbors. Lewis Duckett had a farm of nearly 800 acres near Newberry. Some of it he rented to tenants. On the part he worked himself, he produced 800 bushels of oats, over 1,000 bushels of corn, and 61 bales of cotton in 1881. Joseph Alexander Owens of Barnwell County also started with nothing. By 1881, he was a member of the legislature. He owned a prosperous plantation, ran some stores, and had a large bank account. John Thorne had a 250-acre farm on Edisto Island. All of these men had a great deal more land than the average 143 acre-farm in South Carolina at the time.

Daily Lives Away from the Farm

The great majority of African-Americans followed Richard Carroll's advice to stay on the land and leave the towns and cities of the state to the whites. In 1900, only about one in five African-Americans in South Carolina worked off the farm. That ratio did not change greatly until the middle of the century. Most of those away from the farm made a living as maids, cooks, housekeepers, child care providers, or gardeners for wealthier white families. Thousands of others made their way in business, industry, or in professional careers. They faced terrible odds. They helped pave the way for others who came later. They also created a small but significant middle class. The wealth they accumulated provided a support base for later civil rights movements.

Business, Skilled Crafts, and Labor

After Reconstruction, Randall D. George made a for-

tune in business. His workers made a variety of products from the sap of pine trees, things like turpentine and rosins. He not only made these things, he also shipped them from ports on the coast. When he died in 1891, he owned more land than anyone else in Colleton County. His total worth was well over $100,000, a great deal of money in that day.

Many others followed George's path in smaller ways. At the turn of the century, about 125 African-Americans in South Carolina had businesses worth more than $500. The largest group of successful businesses were in Charleston. Included were fish dealers, stables, wagon makers, printers, retail stores, tailors, stone cutters, barbers, druggists, photographers, and upholsterers. A truck farm worth $100,000 was among the most valuable businesses in Charleston. In Columbia, African-Americans owned and operated about twenty-five different retail stores, in addition to about sixty-five other businesses. Included in these other businesses were three newspapers and two mattress factories.

African-Americans published a variety of newspapers across the state. Most did not last long because of problems in attracting white advertising. For every one that failed, another seemed to take its place. Persistence could have been the motto for these efforts. For example, in 1879 P. B. Morris founded the *Sea Island News.* He kept the paper going till he died in 1891. It was replaced by the *New South,* a joint effort by two other African-Americans in Beaufort County. Almost all of these papers were modest and dealt with noncontroversial topics. However, they led

(Left) Mr. William Manigault (1883-1940) and Mrs. Annie Rivers Manigault (1892-1954). The Manigaults were a hard working family that beat the odds and did well in business. Their home at 1703 Wayne St. in Columbia was said to be the first belonging to an African-American family to have its own swimming pool in its backyard. They lived near Richard Roberts, who took this photo of them in the 1920s. Courtesy of Roberts family. (Right) Richard Roberts 1920s photo of the home of the Jackson family, who moved to Columbia to make a living from a store behind the home. The family raised prize winning flowers in the front yard, turkeys in the back, and was among the first local African-American families to own a car. The house still stands near Five Points. Courtesy of Roberts family.

the way for papers in the 1920s, 1930s, and 1940s that helped begin and strengthen the civil rights movement. *The Palmetto Leader,* published in Columbia, took a moderate stand on civil rights. The *Lighthouse and Informer,* published by John H. McCray, was a little more outspoken.

Banking and finance was one of the most difficult areas for African-Americans to enter. One of the earliest efforts took place in Florence. In 1891, the S.C. Banking Association was created with the sale of 500 shares of stock. Later, in 1899 African-Americans formed a building and loan association in Anderson. Only twelve other such associations existed in the entire nation. In 1921, the state chartered the Mutual Savings Bank of Charleston. It lasted twenty years. In 1921, Dr. H. D. Monteith created in Columbia the most enduring bank, the Victory Savings Bank. Monteith was the brother of Modjeska Monteith Simkins, the state's legendary civil rights leader. Victory Savings Bank survived the massive bank mergers of the 1990s that swallowed many other much larger South Carolina banks.

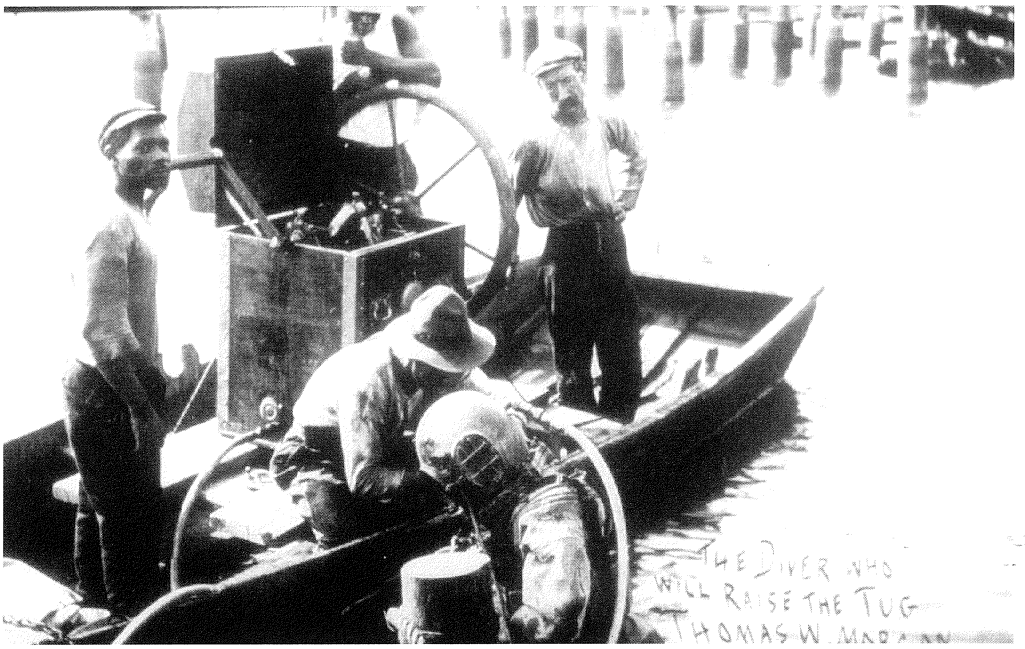
Having a business of ones own has long been a dream of many Americans, black and white. Over his lifetime, Isaac Samuel Leevy developed not just one, but many businesses. Born in Antioch in Kershaw County in 1877, he attended public schools there. He completed his education by studying at Mather Academy in Camden and Hampton Institute in Virginia. Like many others he began his career as a teacher. He was a friend of Richard Carroll, who helped him come to Columbia after college. In 1906, Leevy rejected a well-paying job to return to South Carolina and teach for $35 a month. However, the young man soon went into business for himself as a tailor. Within three years, he had thirty people working for him in a $30,000 a year business. He remained a merchant tailor until 1917. A gifted businessman, he owned and managed many businesses over the years. These included a department store, a service station, a retail furniture store, a barber shop, a beauty shop, a real estate company, a funeral home, and a commercial hog-raising business. Through his businesses he created many jobs for African-Americans in South Carolina. His service station, built during the Depression, had modern restroom facilities that were available to African-American travelers. This was no small thing in a time when African-Americans often had to travel miles out of their way to find such amenities.

Leevy was active in community life. He helped organize the Palmetto State Fair Association so that African-Americans would be able to enjoy a state fair every year. Leevy felt that having educational opportunities was important for African-Americans. He was one of the founders of Booker T. Washington High School and several other public schools. He urged South Carolina State College to make graduate education available for African-Americans. Leevy served as a trustee at Claflin College. He helped to organize the Richland County Tuberculosis Hospital for Negroes at Ridgewood. He was a co-organizer, vice-president, and president of Victory Savings Bank. He served on the Interracial Board of Associated Charities of Richland County, the Interracial Board for Delinquent Negro Girls, as Chairman of the Board for the Colored Soldiers Service Club in World War I, and in many other voluntary positions. In 1936, he headed a committee of college presidents and school leaders who introduced the Social Security program in South Carolina.

I. S. Leevy believed that in order to bring about change, African-Americans must become politically active. A Sunday school superintendent at his own church, he went from church to church urging people to register and vote. He helped organize the Columbia branch of the NAACP. Leevy went beyond these courageous steps to serve as the Richland County Chairman of the S.C. Republican Party and state Vice Chairman. The national party, which did not want to antagonize whites, provided little support. Leevy ran three times for the Columbia City Council and twice for the state legislature, although he never won. Years later, his grandson, I. S. Leevy Johnson, served in the S.C. House of Representatives.

Later in his life, Leevy was recognized for his accomplishments. S.C. State College, Morris College, and Allen University gave him honorary degrees. Benedict College gave him a plaque in 1962 for distinguished service, recognizing his more than sixty years as a business and civic leader. He died in 1968.

Many of the African-American businesses in South Carolina were based on skills African-Ameri-



(Top) Tobacco workers in a room where the quality of the leaves were graded. The photo was taken in Darlington in 1890. Reproduced from Constance B. Schulz, Ed., The History of S.C. Slide Collection, *slide D-68 (Sandlapper Publishing Company, 1989). Courtesy South Caroliniana Library.*
(Bottom) Divers preparing to raise sunken tug boat after a storm in 1911. Courtesy of William Davie Beard, the S.C. Postcard Archive, South Caroliniana Library, USC.

cans had been practicing for generations. While some used their skills to create their own businesses, others sold their time as skilled labor. They also found strength in numbers. Carpenters and brick masons created labor unions. The unions were quite effective in raising wages. Some of these unions were even integrated. For example, in 1886, the Bricklayers Union staged a parade of its white and black members in Charleston in support of raising daily wages from $3 to $5. The 1900 Labor Day Parade in Charleston included about 1,000 marchers. Members of all unions and both races marched. Most were African-Americans.

One of the most successful and longest lasting unions was the Longshoremen's Protective Union Association. Workers organized the union in 1869. The union included both races until 1890 when whites broke away and formed their own group. After the split, the union gradually lost power.

Professionals Beat the Odds

During the brief period of Reconstruction when the state extended civil rights to African-Americans, many were able to enter new professions. For example, Macon B. Allen, the first African-American lawyer in the U.S., joined a law firm in Charleston in 1868. Initially trained as a teacher, he passed the bar exams in Maine and Massachusetts. In 1873, he became a judge in Charleston responsible for hearing criminal cases.

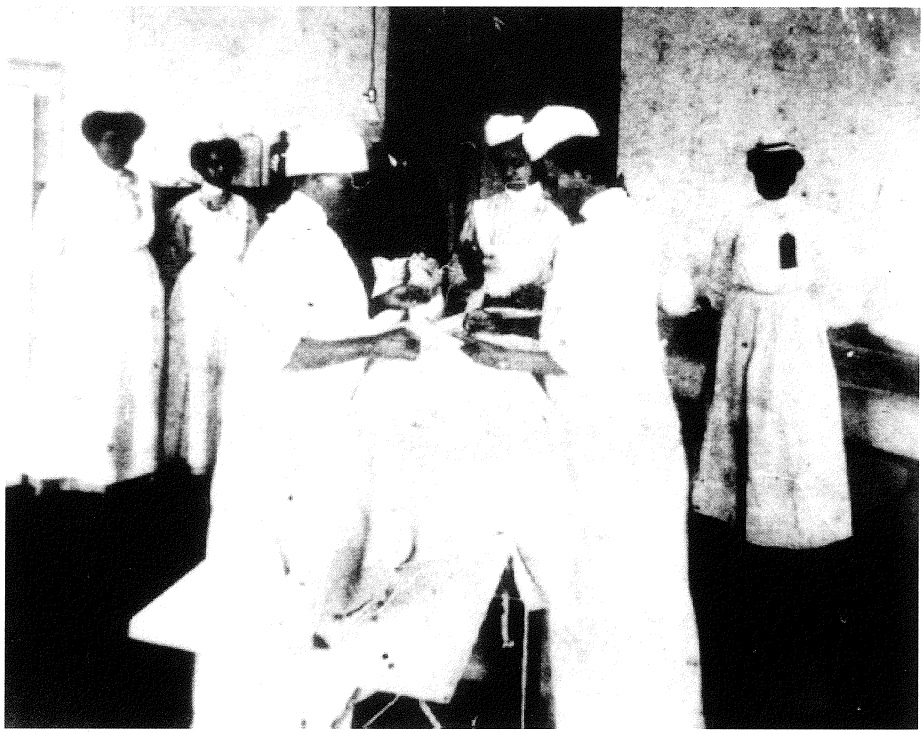
Claflin College, Allen University, and the University of South Carolina trained other African-Americans as lawyers. T. McCants Stewart was a successful lawyer and mathematician. He graduated from the University of South Carolina in 1875 during the brief period in which the university admitted non-whites.

After 1876, the whites who again were running the state raised social, physical, and legal barriers. Only a handful of African-Americans were practicing law in South Carolina by the turn of the century. Stewart left the state to take a position teaching law in Liberia in 1882. Later, he became a lawyer in New York City.

In the post-Civil War years, only a very few professionally trained African-American doctors practiced in South Carolina. Many chose not to return to the state after they completed their training. The first African-American physician to practice in South Carolina was Dr. Lucy Hughes Brown. Born in 1863 in North Carolina, she trained at the Women's Medical College in Philadelphia. She moved to Charleston where she opened the Cannon Hospital and Training School. She died in 1911.

According to the 1890 census, thirty African-American physicians practiced in South Carolina. Only three worked in Charleston and three in Columbia. One of these was Matilda Evans.

Matilda A. Evans was a physician at a time when medicine was virtually closed to both women and African-Americans. She conquered both barriers. South Carolina's first native-born female African-American doctor originally dreamed of becoming a medical missionary. Like so many, her family had little. She was born in Aiken around 1872. She worked her way through Schofield Industrial School in Aiken and Oberlin College in Ohio. During her high school years, she labored in the fields to pay for her education. She covered her college expenses by waitressing. Evans returned to South Carolina to teach at Schofield. During this period she wrote a biography of educator Martha Schofield. However, this was not what she wanted to do with her life. She



Dr. Matilda Evans shown in her operating room around 1900. Courtesy of South Caroliniana Library.

decided to attend medical school. After studying at the Women's Medical College in Philadelphia, she received her M.D. in 1897. No other African-American was in the class. She returned to South Carolina and opened a practice in Columbia. Not one hospital existed for African-Americans there. So she took sick people into her home. Eventually she was able to rent a building where she could house 30 patients. In 1932 she founded the Evans Clinic. She was also one of the founders of the Zion Church Clinic which served poor children.

Dr. Evans rarely allowed anything to stop her from doing something she really wanted to do. She taught herself to swim by reading a book. Then she taught underprivileged boys to swim. She founded a weekly newspaper, was active in her church, and even turned her hand to farming. *The Palmetto Leader* reported in 1932 that she had worked for twenty-five years without even taking a vacation. After a long and productive life, she died in 1935 and was buried in Columbia. Dr. Evans was a pioneer for both women and African-Americans.

For most people, education is the key to success in life. As you have seen, African-Americans faced many closed doors in the years after the Civil War. Dr. Stephen J. Wright was one of the people who found a way to open them. Born in Dillon in 1911, he grew up in North Carolina. His father died when he was five years old. Following family tradition, he went to Virginia's Hampton Institute at the age of fifteen. He graduated with a bachelor's degree in 1934. Wright went on to study for a master's degree at Howard University and a Ph.D. at New York University. A man who believed in hard work all his life, he made a career in the field of higher education. He committed himself to excellence at traditionally African-American universities. His first position was at Hampton University. He served as president of Bluefield State College from 1953-1957 and of Fisk University from 1957-1966. Fisk's reputation soared after he came. Dr. Wright became one of the nation's foremost educators. He published numerous articles on education and foreign affairs. He became president of the United Negro College Fund and Vice President of the College Entrance Examination Board. Several universities appointed him to their boards of trustees. The President of the United States appointed him to two separate special commissions. Because of his expertise, lawyers asked him to testify in several major court cases about the effect of segregation on education. Dr. Wright was one of those who made it possible for others to beat the odds.

Thomas S. Martin, another African-American educator who made a difference. Martin taught at Booker T. Washington High School from 1938 until 1968. In addition to teaching, he coached tennis, football, and basketball, and helped build support for the first public swimming pool for African-Americans in Columbia. He was also uncle to S.C. Astronaut Charles Bolden. Martin died in 1993. This Richard Roberts photo was taken about 1925. Courtesy of Roberts family.

Emigration

While many stayed, many also left the state. Their leaving deprived the state of much talent, but it also had several positive aspects. When those who left found success elsewhere, they sent money back to relatives in the state. They paved the way for others

who could not find success in South Carolina. Finally, they were the nation's gain. Many made positive contributions to America and even to the world. We cannot talk about what African-Americans gave to South Carolina without talking about what they gave in many other places as well.

Exodus to Liberia

Right after the 1876 elections, large numbers of African-Americans became interested in moving to Africa. Most were poor farmers who had no land of their own. With whites back in control, they knew they would have little chance of ever owning land. A number of leaders encouraged the exodus. While Richard Carroll urged them to the farms of South Carolina, another politically active ministers urged them to leave the state. The Reverend Richard H. Cain was a member of Congress who also published his own newspaper. Over and over again, he ran an editorial entitled "Ho for Africa! One-million men wanted for Africa." Some ministers opposed the movement fearing they would lose some good members. Later most leaders decided that those with the greatest discontent should leave and take their discontent with them.

Whites became alarmed. They feared they would lose cheap hard working labor. They tried to discourage would-be emigrants by spreading rumors that the whole idea was a fraud. While it was not a fraud, it was not as easy as many thought. Few had the money to pay their way. About 200 did make it to Liberia in 1878. It was not as wonderful as they had thought. Word got back that life could be as hard in Liberia as in South Carolina. Few others went. Despite this, many of those who did go worked hard and found success.

Westward Ho! Pioneers and Cowboys

Moving to the American West was much easier than moving to Africa. It did not require the great expense of a ship passage. Nor did it require as much organi-

Settlers in Oklahoma, part of the exodus of African-Americans from South Carolina and other southern states. Courtesy of Western History Collections, University of Oklahoma Library.

zation. Best estimates are that about 20,000 South Carolina African-Americans left the state for the West between 1880 and 1900. The movement began about the same time interest arose in African emigration. In early 1878, around forty African-Americans left the Chester area and moved to Kansas. In the early 1880s, about 5,000 residents of Edgefield County left for Arkansas. They left complaining that no matter how hard they worked, they could not make a decent living.

Emigration societies began forming. In 1881, a former school commissioner in Aiken County organized such a society near Trenton. William H. Lawson, with the help of the Reverend John Hammond, headed the group. They held revival-like meetings to stir up interest. The day after Christmas in 1882, several hundred left on a train bound for the West. Wagons filled with other people followed. Some headed for Texas and some for other states in the West.

White landowners soon began to feel the pinch. They could not get the labor they needed. Again they resorted to rumors and warnings to prevent them from leaving. Some African-American political leaders like Robert Smalls, who had not lost all his power, tried to convince people to stay. But continued hard times on the farm and continued discrimination only increased the urge to leave. Most who left would have agreed with AME Bishop Benjamin Arnett. In 1889 he spoke to the graduating class at Claflin College. He outlined two reasons to go. First, like other pioneers, they could find prosperity. Second, leaving would help those who stayed. With less competition, they could demand better wages.

Those who left the state for the West did not always take their families. Although few books tell about this, some became cowboys. Historians estimate that about 5,000 African-Americans worked as cowboys on cattle drives on the Chisholm Trail. The trail ran from the cattle ranges of Texas to Kansas, where the cattle were loaded on trains. No doubt there were many among these cow punchers who could trace their roots through South Carolina.

The Great Migration to Cities

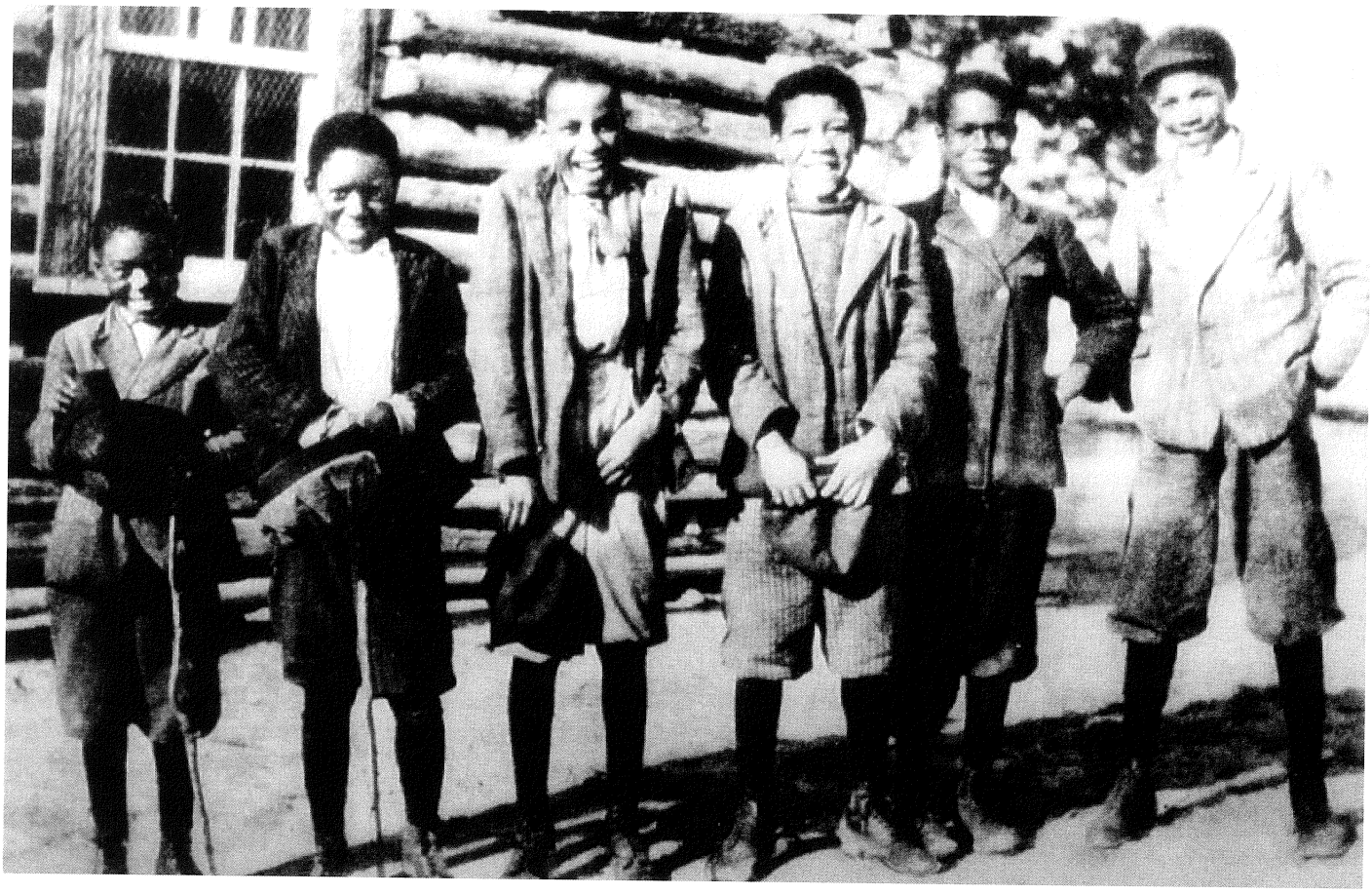
Many more of those who fled the harsh conditions of South Carolina went to Northern cities. While some of this movement took place before 1900, most of it took place after the turn of the century. Migration out of the South was greatest in the years around World War I. It continued until the 1930s, when the Great Depression reduced job opportunities in Northern cities. Migration increased again during World War II. Historians estimate that in the first half of the 1900s the state had a net loss of well over a half million African-Americans. The exodus from South Carolina was so great during the period around World War I that it is remembered as the "Great Migration." We can also see the impact of migration on Northern cities. More than one in every ten African-Americans living in New York City, Washington, and Philadelphia in 1930 had been born in South Carolina.

People left for a number of reasons. Of course, discrimination was one important reason. That became worse after South Carolina rewrote its constitution in 1895 and passed laws that required racial separation. The main reasons were economic. The soil was worn out from growing crop after crop of cotton. The price of cotton was often quite low. This ruined many of those who depended on it as their main cash crop. Then there was the boll weevil, a new arrival in the South. This one-fourth inch long insect nearly destroyed cotton farms all over the South. It lays its eggs in the bud of the cotton plant. When the eggs hatch, the larvae eat the inside so that it never grows into a boll filled with cotton.

Finally, for those families who were smart enough not to depend on cotton, like the families in Promised Land, there was the problem of subdivision. If a family had more than one child, the farm had to be divided for the next generation in order for each to have land. Because the farms were small to start with, this was impractical. Many children knew that they would have to go elsewhere to make a living. Their movement created a pattern that was repeated thousands of times. One family or family member would make the move and find work. Then others would follow.

The Story of the Reynolds Family

Martha Letman and Charlie Reynolds lived near each other in Promised Land. They fell in love and married. Neither set of parents was able to give them enough land or financial support to have their own farm. They



Caddies. Young men hustled to make any money they could. This photograph was taken of a group of enterprising youth in Camden in the early 1900s. Courtesy of William Davie Beard, the S.C. Postcard Archive, South Caroliniana Library, USC.

tried to survive as sharecroppers. Finally, seeing that things would get no better, they left. At first they tried to farm with relatives in Mississippi. That did not work out any better. Next they moved to Chicago with half-grown children and their hopes and dreams of a better life. The family all pitched in. They all worked at jobs and shared their earnings. Eventually they were able to move to a middle-class neighborhood. Then they sent for Martha's brother Tim, who was blind and could find little to do in Promised Land. Next came another of Martha's brothers, Allen. He lived with the Reynolds until he could afford his own place. On visits home he spoke of his success. Soon other families followed. Sometimes the husband came first. He would live with friends or relatives and save until the rest of the family could afford to come.

The pattern continued in other cities. Friends and family helped friends and family. Those were the values these people learned from their roots on the farms of South Carolina. They carried those values with them.

Lost Brain Power

Achieving full potential was difficult for African-Americans through most of the century after the Civil War. Many left South Carolina.

An early emigre who played an important role in the formation and early history of the NAACP was Archibald Grimke. Born into enslavement in South Carolina in 1849, Grimke was a nephew of Sarah and Angelina Grimke. The Grimke sisters were socially prominent white Charlestonians who spoke out

against enslavement and eventually left the South. This family connection provided Archibald Grimke the chance to escape enslavement and South Carolina. One of the first African-Americans to attend Harvard Law School, he went on to serve as American Consul to the Dominican Republic in the 1890s. Later he helped W. E. B. DuBois found the NAACP and served in important positions in the organization. Historians regard Grimke as almost as important an intellectual leader as W. E. B. DuBois and Booker T. Washington.

One of the people who did the most to provide education to African-Americans in the South was Mary McLeod Bethune. Mary McLeod was born in 1875 near Mayesville. Both her parents had been enslaved. Her mother was the descendant of African royalty. Mary remembered helping her mother take laundry to white families who hired her to clean their clothes. At one home a white child about her own age insulted her. Because Mary could not read, the child screamed at her to put down a book she had picked up. That made her determined to read and to teach others to read. That is just what she did.

Mary McLeod met and married Albertus L. Bethune when she was a teacher in Sumter. In 1904 she moved to Daytona, Florida. There, with only a few dollars and a lot of prayer, she started a school for African-American girls. She also had a lot of courage. One winter night in 1920, about eighty hooded Klan members came to her school and threatened to burn it down. She stood in front of the school and sang a hymn. She told them that if they burned it down, she would build it right back up again. With a lot of work, the school eventually became a four-year college. In 1923, it merged with a boys' school and today is known as Bethune-Cookman College. Bethune was president of the school until 1942.

Mary McLeod Bethune's accomplishments extend well beyond the field of education. Four presidents appointed her to national government positions. With a 1935 appointment as head of the Division of Negro Affairs of the National Youth Administration, she became the first African-American woman to run a federal agency. In 1935 she also founded the National Council of Negro Women and received the Spingarn Medal. She died in 1955.

Others left not only South Carolina, but the United States. Dr. Ernest Everett Just was born in 1883 in Charleston to a poor family with little money for such "luxuries" as medical care. He miraculously survived an epidemic of cholera and diphtheria that killed the two older children in his family one winter. At the age of thirteen, he left for Orangeburg to study at the Colored Normal Industrial Agricultural and Mechanics College. Later he went to Dartmouth College in New Hampshire, where he was an excellent student. After completing college, Just taught English at Howard University. However, he was more interested in science. He began to teach zoology and became a leader in the field of biology. In 1913 he was the first person to receive the NAACP's Spingarn Award. The award is given annually to an African-American for outstanding achievement. Just had continued his education as well. In 1916 he received a Ph.D. in marine biology from the University of Chicago. He also did research in marine biology every summer until 1930 at the Marine Biological Laboratory at Wood's Hole, Massachusetts.

However, Dr. Just found that he could not live with the racial discrimination he faced in his work. In 1931 he moved to Europe. He spent most of the next ten years there, where he died in 1941. During his long career, he published two books and over sixty articles. His work in cell biology greatly contributed to scientific understanding of how a cell works.

Once Reconstruction was over, talented African-Americans had few chances to obtain higher education in South Carolina. One of those who left the state and made his career elsewhere was the Honorable Harold A. Stevens. Born on Johns Island in 1907, he moved with his mother to Columbia at the age of three after his father died. There they lived with his mother's parents until she remarried. He attended high school at Claflin College. After receiving a bachelor's degree from Benedict College in 1930, Stevens wanted to attend law school. African-Americans could not attend USC Law School. So Stevens left the state. He attended Boston College, receiving a law degree in 1936. He was the first African-American to receive a degree in Labor Law from that college.

Stevens settled in New York to practice law, where he had a long and productive career as a labor lawyer. He received many awards and honors. He served in the military in World War II, was the Special

Counsel to President Franklin Roosevelt's Commission on Fair Employment Practices, was chief counsel to the Brotherhood of Sleeping Car Porters, and served in the state legislature. Following this, he won an election as a judge. Eventually, he became the presiding judge in the Appellate Division of New York's Supreme Court. This was the highest position held by any African-American in a state court system. He also contributed his time to many organizations as a board member or trustee.

The world of fashion has been slow to acknowledge that African-Americans have the same needs as other Americans for developing a positive self-image. A South Carolina born businesswoman, Ophelia DeVore-Mitchell, has worked hard to overcome those obstacles. DeVore-Mitchell was born in Edgefield in 1922, but her family moved north to New York during the 1930s. A good student, she completed high school there and then attended college at New York University. She received a bachelor's degree in math.

Working as a model, DeVore-Mitchell had to combat many false images of African-Americans. So, in 1946 she decided to open the Grace Del Marco Model Agency with several friends. Two years later she opened the Ophelia DeVore School of Self-Development and Modeling. Among her agency's famous clients were actresses Cicely Tyson and Diahann Carroll.

DeVore-Mitchell has also excelled in another area where few women are at the top. She owns a newspaper in Columbus, Georgia, the *Columbus Times,* which specializes in African-American concerns. She has operated it since 1970, when her husband passed away.

Various companies and agencies have recognized DeVore-Mitchell's achievements by giving her over 200 awards. Other businesspeople acknowledged her capability by hiring her as a consultant. She was also a representative on the President's Advisory Commission on the Arts. Her accomplishments demonstrate that an individual can shatter stereotypes.

Troy Brailey of Lynchburg became a union leader after he left South Carolina. Born in 1916, he rose to one of the top posts in one of the most powerful African-American unions in the nation, the Brotherhood of Sleeping Car Porters. He later became an active leader in the civil rights movement. He helped organize the 1963 march on Washington, D. C. at which Martin Luther King gave his most famous speech.

Slowly Building for a Better Day

These are just a sample of the people who left the state to make a positive mark on the world. You will meet others, like Benjamin Mays, later in the book. They were certainly a loss to South Carolina. But those who stayed, survived, endured, and found a little prosperity made change possible for the next generation. We should not forget all their years of quiet sacrifice.